

COUNTRY DATA: MEXICO: Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

The site of advanced Amerindian civilizations, Mexico came under Spanish rule for three centuries before achieving independence early in the 19th century. A devaluation of the peso in late 1994 threw Mexico into economic turmoil, triggering the worst recession in over half a century. The nation had been making an impressive recovery until the global financial crisis hit in late 2008. Ongoing economic and social concerns include low real wages, underemployment for a large segment of the population, inequitable income distribution, and few advancement opportunities for the largely Amerindian population in the impoverished southern states. The elections held in 2000 marked the first time since the 1910 Mexican Revolution that an opposition candidate - Vicente FOX of the National Action Party (PAN) - defeated the party in government, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). He was succeeded in 2006 by another PAN candidate Felipe CALDERON.

GEOGRAPHY

Location	Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the United States and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the United States.
Area	1,964,375 sq km
Climate	Varies from tropical to desert.
Natural Resources	Petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas, timber.
Total Renewable Water Resources	457.2 cu km (2000)
Freshwater Withdrawal	78.22 cu km/yr (17%/5%/77%)
Natural Hazards	Tsunamis along the Pacific coast, volcanoes and destructive earthquakes in the center and south, and hurricanes on the Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean coasts. Volcanism: Mexico experiences volcanic activity in the central-southern part of the country; the volcanoes in Baja California are mostly dormant; Colima (elev. 3,850 m, 12,631 ft), which erupted in 2010, is Mexico's most active volcano and is responsible for causing periodic evacuations of nearby villagers; it has been deemed a "Decade Volcano" by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, worthy of study due to its explosive history and close proximity to human populations; Popocatepetl (elev. 5,426 m, 17,802 ft) poses a threat to Mexico City; other historically active volcanoes include Barcena, Ceboruco, El Chichon, Michoacan-Guanajuato, Pico de Orizaba, San Martin, Socorro, and Tacana.
Environmental	Scarcity of hazardous waste disposal facilities; rural to urban migration; natural fresh water resources scarce and polluted in north, inaccessible and poor quality in center and extreme

Issues	southeast; raw sewage and industrial effluents polluting rivers in urban areas; deforestation; widespread erosion; desertification; deteriorating agricultural lands; serious air and water pollution in the national capital and urban centers along US-Mexico border; land subsidence in Valley of Mexico caused by groundwater depletion. <i>Note: the government considers the lack of clean water and deforestation national security issues.</i>
PEOPLE	
Population	112,468,855 (July 2010 est.)
Ethnic Groups	Mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%
Religions	Roman Catholic 76.5%, Protestant 6.3% (Pentecostal 1.4%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.1%, other 3.8%), other 0.3%, unspecified 13.8%, none 3.1% (2000 census).
Languages	Spanish only 92.7%, Spanish and indigenous languages 5.7%, indigenous only 0.8%, unspecified 0.8%; note - indigenous languages include various Mayan, Nahuatl, and other regional languages (2005).
Literacy Rate	86.1%
Major Infectious Diseases	Degree of risk: intermediate Food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever Vectorborne disease: dengue fever Water contact disease: leptospirosis (2009) HIV/AIDS – adult prevalence rate: 0.3% (2007 est.)
GOVERNMENT	
Type	Federal Republic
Independence	16 September 1810 (declared); 27 September 1821 (recognized by Spain).
Constitution	5 February 1917
Legal System	Mixture of US constitutional theory and civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts; accepts compulsory International Court of Justice jurisdiction with reservations.
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	Corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, beans, cotton, coffee, fruit, tomatoes; beef, poultry, dairy products; wood products.
Industries	Food and beverages, tobacco, chemicals, iron and steel, petroleum, mining, textiles, clothing, motor vehicles, consumer durables, tourism.
Import commodities	Metalworking machines, steel mill products, agricultural machinery, electrical equipment, car parts for assembly, repair parts for motor vehicles, aircraft, and aircraft parts.
Import Partners	US 56.7%, China 9.35%, South Korea 5.21% (2009).
Export Commodities	Manufactured goods, oil and oil products, silver, fruits, vegetables, coffee, cotton.
Export Partners	US 80.5%, Canada 3.6%, Germany 1.4% (2009).

Per Capita GDP	\$13,200 (2009 est.).
Population below poverty line	18.2% using food-based definition of poverty; asset based poverty amounted to more than 47% (2008).

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.